

## *Study on the Holy Spirit*

### Discerning of spirits

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This week we will look at Discerning of spirits.

- **1 Cor 12:10** *to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.*
- **1 Cor 12:10 (NLT)** *He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and to another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to know whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit that is speaking. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, and another is given the ability to interpret what is being said.*
- **1 Tim 6:3-5** *If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.*

There are many cults and false teachers that teach, but don't teach the word in truth. They use the bible as a source for their teaching, but some of them don't proclaim it as the complete truth. They say that you have to have a companion book, because the bible is not complete. So they add their man made laws and ways to pervert the truth to fit their needs.

But the word of God says to that

- **Prov 30:5-6** *Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.*

God himself has proved these false teachers a liar, because their teachings don't stand up to the word of God.

Solomon asked God:

- **1 Kings 3:9 (NIV)** *So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?*

We should all desire a discerning heart like Solomon did, especially if you are an older Christian so we can expose the lies of satan to the younger ones.

- **Heb 5:13-14 (NLT)** *And a person who is living on milk isn't very far along in the Christian life and doesn't know much about doing what is right. Solid food is for those who are mature, who have trained themselves to recognize the difference between right and wrong and then do what is right.*

The next couple of verses are prophecies about Jesus, indicating that He had the gift of Discernment.

- **Isaiah 7:14-15** *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. "Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.*
- **Isaiah 11:1-5** *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.*
- **1 Cor 2:13-16** *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

Yes, we have as believers have the mind of Christ, and those of the world do not understand the things of the bible, they call it foolishness, they can't accept it. But we speak the word of Christ, not by our wisdom, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- **Prov 3:21-24** *My son, let them not depart from your eyes-- Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.*

But how do we have discernment. Remember that with most of the gifts, we cannot conjure them up when we want to, but when the Lord knows when it's the appropriate time, and He will be glorified. Not man.

It's the same way, in a sense, with the gift of discernment.

Only something different, you need to be in the word of God to know the word and to know when it's being taught wrong.

For example,

If you got in a car, and never driven before but read the manual on how to operate it. Then someone got in the car with you and told you to step on the brake to go, and to step on the gas pedal to stop. You would question it because the manufacturer of the car says in the manual the opposite. It says to step on the brake to stop and on the gas pedal to go. It's the same with the word of God, If someone says, "*you must be baptized to get to heaven*", even though you haven't been to heaven, you would know by reading the bible that the only way to heaven is through Jesus and not baptism.

- **John 14:6** *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Jesus is the only way to heaven. If you were baptized as a child it doesn't mean you will go to heaven. Think of the thief on the cross where Jesus said,

- **Luke 23:43** *And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

Now this thief was not baptized, but still Jesus told him that he would be with Him in Paradise.

It doesn't mean you shouldn't be baptized, which you should as a believer, just that you don't base your salvation on baptism.

Jesus is the only way,

- **Eph 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Have you been trying to get to heaven by doing things to earn your way into heaven? As we just saw in John 14:6 Jesus is the way the truth and the life.

Will you stop trying to get to heaven your way by your good deeds, and do it the easy way and the only way, through Jesus Christ?

Just pray this prayer from your heart and you will be saved.

***Jesus, I admit I am a sinner. I know the bible says that You are the only way to the Father. Please forgive me for my sins, I believe that You died for my sins and paid the price on the cross for me. Thank You for saving me. Thank You for dying for me. Come into my life and make me new. Help me to share with others what You did for them and me.***

***I ask this in Your name Jesus. AMEN***

You are now a Christian. Go and tell someone what you just did, or send me an E-mail telling me. Welcome to the family of God!

- **Deut 4:5-8** *"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' "For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? "And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?"*

We are also taught by the pastor of the church, or in a bible study like this one, also by listening to Christian radio, and even some Christian teaching on TV.

But using the gift of discernment is not taking what you hear at face value, but searching the scriptures to determine if you have been taught the truth, especially if something doesn't sound right.

Have you ever been to a church or a home group or seen a pastor on TV teaching, but something just doesn't seem right about what he or she is saying?

That's the gift of discernment. But also along with the uneasy feeling you have, you will also be able to discern what part of the teaching is not part of the word of God as you study the word and ask God to reveal it to you.

- **Psalms 119:97-104** *Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.*

Do you love the word of God? Reading this Psalm tells us the reward of studying and meditating on the word.

- **Eph 6:10-18** *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of*

*God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints*

We will not go over the armor of God (There is a teaching here on it), but remember that when the gift of discernment is used, it is very wise to have on the armor of God, because when you confront a lie, you must be prepared for battle, because you may have one.

- **Acts 19:13-15** *Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"*

Are you known? Are you a child of God? Don't battle without the armor, but even more so, don't battle without the maker of the armor!

Here are some verses for you to read which talk about deceivers and those who practice a lie rather than the word of God.

- **Deut 18:10-12** *"There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, "or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. "For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.*
- **Col 2:8.** *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*
- **Heb 13:9** *Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.*
- **1 Tim 4:1-3** *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*
- **1 Tim 6:11-13** *But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,*

Here are some Scriptures on discernment:

- **1 John 4:6** *We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.*
- **Acts 16:16-18** *Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.*
- **Matt 16:21-23** *From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.**"*

Sometimes Satan can be very deceiving. What may seem to be the truth or good is not always what it seems. This is where the flesh comes in and can deceive us; our eyes are not truly focused on Jesus, but on the flesh. That's why we must be in the spirit and not the flesh.

You would think that Peter was right in wanting to protect Jesus, but the truth was if they tried to stop the crucifixion of Jesus, then the prophecies would not all be fulfilled therefor making the death of Jesus of no effect.

Your homework for this week is to:

1. Go to church on Sunday, listen to the message, take notes, and verify what the pastor says against the word of God.

Or,

2. Listen to a half-hour Christian teaching on the radio/internet, and then check it against the word of God.

Or,

3. Watch a program on Christian TV and secular TV and check them against the word of God. (This is a good one to do with your kids)

Or,

4. Listen to a popular song on secular radio and a Christian song and check them both against the word of God. (This is also a good one to do with your kids)

Next week we will get into the gift of tongues.

May the Lord richly bless you in His love, Grace and Mercy, and may you bless others the same way.